

**REPORT
ON AN
EXAMINATION OF THE PROPOSED ADDITION
TO WENAHA FOREST RESERVE
OREGON**

By

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The proposed addition to the Wenaha Forest Reserve is located in Umatilla County, Ore. It includes the greater part of Township 1 south to 3 north, Range 36 east, and a small part of Township 1 north, Range 35 east, Willamette meridian, Ore., the boundaries as shown on the map in red pencil, approximately 70,000 acres.

Topography

The region is very rough and broken, with deep narrow canyons, steep slopes, and narrow ridges with practically no bench or bottom land. There are no points of unusual high altitude, none of the peaks being over 5,500 feet above sea level. There is great range in comparative altitude for so small a territory, for instance the creeks are only from 1,800 to 2,000 feet above sea level while the ridges have an altitude from 3,500 to 5,500 feet. The soil is generally shallow and loose with rocks cropping out everywhere on the ridges and slopes. The loose soil is easily eroded unless protected by timber, brush or grass roots.

Climate and Precipitation

The climate is too severe for agriculture, except in the lower canyons where a few small patches are being cultivated. I have no means of knowing the precipitation or temperature. The weather bureau at Walla Walla, Wash., gives the mean annual precipitation 17.70 inches and the mean annual temperature 53° F. The precipitation increases as you go from the lower lands toward the mountains and probably reaches 30 inches per annum, and the mean annual temperature is below that of Walla Walla and is probably about 45° F. The prevailing rainladen winds are from the west, the rain clouds coming up the Columbia River generally pass over the hot plains and condense when they come in contact with the cooler foothills and mountains.

The Forest

Accompanying this report is a forest map showing the different stands of timber. [Compiler's Note: A map was not included with this copy of the report.] There is but a small part covered with merchantable forest. The greater part of the tract is covered with scattering bunches of timber, brush land, chaparral and open bunchgrass ridges and slopes which had never been covered with timber. The merchantable forest in the Black and Wilber Mountain regions are chiefly white fir, red fir, and yellow pine. In the southwestern part there is considerable lodgepole pine which is being extensively used for fuel and I will consider it merchantable forest. The timber of the woodland part is too

scattering to be of any merchantable value at the present time, although it probably will be used in the future.

Very little damage has been done by fire. There are a few small burnt tracts but they are so scattering and of small area that they are hardly worth considering. There is very little cultivated land. The country is too rough for cultivation. A few small patches are being cultivated in the canyons.

The characteristic species are:

White fir	25	per cent
Red fir	20	" "
Lodgepole pine	15	" "
Yellow pine	15	" "
Tamarack	10	" "
Noble fir	5	" "
Engelmann spruce	5	" "
Cottonwood	<u>5</u>	" "
Total	100	

The classification and area shown in the following table:

	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER CENT</u>
Commercial forest (5,000–8,000 ft. B.M. per acre)	5,600	8
Commercial forest (1,000–5,000 ft. B.M. per acre)	7,000	10
Woodland	42,000	60
Bunch grass land	14,700	21
Agricultural land	<u>700</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	70,000	100

The timber estimated at 40,000,000 feet B.M. is very inaccessible. It is nearly all on the higher and rough hills, except in southwestern part, which is chiefly valuable for fuel and could be marketed. The prevailing stumpage price is 50 cents per 1,000 feet. None should be sold for less than \$1.50 per M. and that only in small lots or what is necessary for the local demand. It is necessary to protect the forest cover in order to protect the waterflow. Should the forest cover be destroyed by cutting the timber and overgrazing erosion will follow, resulting in spring floods at the expense of the water supply during the summer when it is needed for irrigation in the lower Umatilla valley.

Industries

The only industry within the proposed addition is stock grazing, which will be treated under grazing.

Settlement

The alienated land is as following:

	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER CENT</u>
Patented land	10,640	15.2
Homestead entry	9,960	14.2
School land	3,840	5.5
Public land	<u>45,560</u>	<u>65.1</u>
Total	70,000	100.00

It will be seen by the above table that more than 1/3 of the area is either patented or claimed, but the homestead entries should not be considered alienated land as **none** of the homesteaders are living on their claims. The majority of the claims are being held to control the grazing.

Roads and Trails

There is a wagon road along the Umatilla River and one near the south boundary. The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company road runs along Meacham Creek. The country is comparatively open and there are trails on nearly all the ridges. Very little work was necessary to open the trails.

Lumbering

Very little lumbering has been done on the proposed addition. About 500,000 feet B.M. has been cut on the east fork of Meacham Creek. It was only culled over and no harm was done to the forest cover. There will be little or no lumbering for several years. The timber is too scattering to make it profitable. Some cordwood may be cut in the southwestern part. The prices in the near-by towns are as following:

Tamarack and yellow pine, for finishing	\$40.00 per M
Red fir and white fir; Rough lumber, etc.	\$20.00 to \$30.00 per M
Cordwood, usually red fir and lodgepole pine.....	\$7.00 per cord

Nearly all the lumber is shipped in from the Coast and there is no demand for the timber from the proposed addition.

Grazing

The demand upon the range is in excess of its capacity. There are now using the range about 11,000 grown sheep, 1,000 head of cattle, and 200 head of horses. The few settlers along the Umatilla River and Meacham Creek are depending wholly on the range for their stock. The majority of the cattle and horses are owned by near-by settlers and depend on this range for their summer grazing. The 11,000 head of sheep using this range are wintered in the western part of Umatilla and Morrow counties, Oreg.

The sheep are driven in in May, and are grazed on this summer range during the months of June – July – August and September, and are taken to their winter range in October. The usual size of the bands are 1,200 ewes with increase or 2,400 head of dry sheep. The sheepmen own 40-acre tracts in different parts of the reserve, in which they have their headquarter camps, or hold it to control a certain part of the range. There has been no conflict of a serious nature between the cattle and sheepmen. The pasture land may be divided into two divisions, first, the lower bunch grass hills along the streams, second, the higher hills which are rough and usually covered with timber or brush. The first class is used by the cattle and horses, the second class is used by the sheep, the grazing season for cattle and horses to be from April 15 to November 31, for sheep June 10 to October 10. The number of stock to be allowed, cattle 1,000, horses 200, sheep 7,000 head, all over 6 months old to be counted.

Fires

There has been very little damage by fires. The timber is scattering and it has been so closely grazed that the fire very seldom scatters from one patch of timber to another. If the reserve is patrolled there will be little danger of fires as the campers and stockmen would be more careful about leaving their campfires burning. The patrolling would be done by the ranger looking after the grazing.

Sentiment

Local sentiment is strongly in favor of the reserve. The only objections come from the big stockmen. They know that the range is overstocked and fear a reduction of their herds. The small stockman and farmers are in favor of its creation. Some of the sheepmen fear that the sheep will be excluded. A reasonable number is recommended and will do no harm if properly distributed and handled. All stockmen will admit that the range is being destroyed and should be protected.

Conclusion

The proposed addition to the Wenaha Forest Reserve is important for the following reasons.

To protect the streams heading within the areas, and avoid as much as possible the spring freshets, and to insure a more even water flow during the summer when it is needed for irrigation.

To protect the forest from fires, and the destruction of the range and forest by overgrazing.

To protect the grazing lands, which is properly the range of the small herds of cattle of adjacent settlers, from the big sheepmen who bring their sheep from a distance.

It is therefore recommended that the proposed addition be included and made a part of the Wenaha Forest Reserve, the boundaries to be as marked on the accompanying map.

Administration

For the protection of the proposed addition: One Assistant Forest Ranger, at \$900 per annum, to be on duty the entire year, is all that will be required. It is to be district No. 9.

As it is to be under the same administration as the Wenaha Forest Reserve the same rules should apply and no special regulations required.

Ranger Camps

There should be 3 Rangers' cabins and horse pastures, one on the Umatilla River, one near the head of southeast of Umatilla River and one in the southern part.

There will not be many timber sales, free use of timber, or privileges. There may be trespassing. Some of the homesteaders are in the habit of cutting and selling the timber, who do not live on their claims and make no pretense of cultivating the land.

No goats to be allowed within the reserve.

The number of sheep should be reduced from 11,000 to 7,000 the first season. The greatest reduction should fall on those that have only used the range one season and live at a distance from the reserve. Last spring some of the sheep were shipped by train from their winter range to the reserve.

The same number of cattle and horses should be allowed as were grazed last season, the grazing fees to be the same as for the Wenaha Forest Reserve.